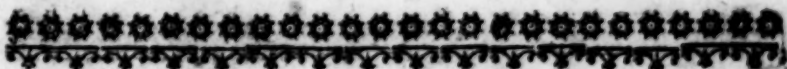




Dr. *Byles's*
DISCOURSE
ON THE
GLORIOUS CHANGE
OF THE
VILE BODY.





A
DISCOURSE
ON THE
Present Vileness of the Body,
AND
It's Future Glorious Change
BY
CHRIST.

By MATHER BYLES, D. D. *✱*

Pastor of a Church in Boston.

Act. xvii. 18. — *He preached unto them JESUS,
and the Resurrection.*

THE SECOND EDITION.

BOSTON, NEW-ENGLAND:
RE-PRINTED BY THOMAS AND JOHN FLEET,
AT THE HEART & CROWN IN CORNHILL, 1771.

DISCOURSE

ON THE

Profound Wisdom of the Body

AND

Its Glorious Change

OF THE



BY

AS

THE

NEW

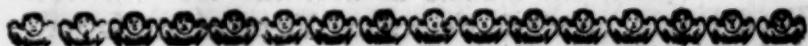
BY

AT



T H E

Glorious Change of the Vile Body.



P H I L I P. III. 21.

Who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body.

THE Apostle Paul in the Chapter open before us, after some Precepts laid down, concludes with two Motives to perswade Men to the Practice of them; And these are, the *Coming of CHRIST*, in the Verse preceding my Text; and the *Resurrection of the Saints* now read unto you. Both of them are very solemn and sublime Thoughts; But it is only the latter which comes immediately within the Compass of our present Meditation.

The *Resurrection of the Dead*, and, which is much the same thing, the *Transformation of those found alive*, at the coming of CHRIST, are very clearly revealed in the New Testament, especially by the Apostle Paul. But the Glory of a Believer's Raised Body is not, nor indeed can it be any where more fully express'd, than in the Words under our immediate View. *Who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body.*

The Apostle tells us, Our Bodies are now *vile*; our vile Bodies shall be *changed*; it is our Lord JESUS CHRIST who shall change them; and they shall be *fashion'd like unto his glorious Body*. How much is crowded into a few Words!
how

6 *The glorious Change of the vile Body.*

how emphatical are they ! how copious ! how sublime ! How amply do they fill the Mind, and exhaust the Imagination, inspire our Faith, and awaken our Joy ?

In handling these Words, I shall only have Time to speak to three of the four Articles (or if you please, *Doctrines*) which you see are plainly contained in them.

These Bodies of ours, in their present State, are VILE BODIES. Who shall change our vile Bodies ? Shall we here let our Thoughts loose upon a few Particulars, which will render it plain, and humble us with the sad Conviction. These Bodies, of whose Beauty and Vigor we are so apt to boast, alas, they are vile Bodies.

Their *Original* is mean and despicable. In the Sense of the *Greek Text*, our Body was vile, even in the Purity of its first Creation. The Word which we translate *vile*, is *ταπεινός*: The Body of our *Humiliation*. 'Tis a *humble Body*. It carries *Humiliation* even in its Origin and Constitution. It comes from *Humus*; the *moist Ground*; The *Clay*; the *low Earth*. The First Principle of *Humane*, is *Humus*. Humiliation and Vileness is thus entail'd upon our Body, even from the primitive Materials out of which it was framed. Even *Adam* in Paradise and Innocence, might in this sacred sense, have own'd a Vile Body.

And now, Let the Proud Creature look down to the Earth and view the Dust from which he sprung, and then confess his Body Vile. *And the Lord God formed Man out of the Dust of the Ground.*† Out of the Clay was this living Frame fashioned; here it had its humble Original; and from this abject Earth did it arise and shoot up, thus curious in its Form and Constitution. This beauteous Arrangement of finer Dust, was taken from the common Glebe, into which it must quickly fall, and resolve again. The Limbs which now shew the exactest Symmetry and Proportion, the Pulses which beat with the fiercest Energy and Life, and the Aspect that is flush'd with Health and Beauty, owe all their Existence to the same Clods of Earth which harbour our Brethren.

† Gen. ii. 7.

thren, the Worms: The Worms, which wait to feast upon our mouldering Carcase; and riot in our wasting Flesh. *The Body is of the Earth, earthy: Dust it is, and to Dust it shall return.* Let us reflect thus, and then confess, **THIS VILE BODY.**

It is a *sinful* Body, and therefore a vile Body. It has in it a Body of Death; and no wonder it looks ghastly, and loathsome, and vile. All its Appetites are vitiated, and disorder'd, and it leads the Soul about like a Malefactor in Chains. The Spirit which God has *infused*, is depraved and polluted by it: and Original Sin is *communicated* thro' the Veins of the guilty Parent. The several *Senses* of the Body prove so many Traitors to the nobler Faculties of the Mind, and continually captivate and debase it. How many Sins enter at the *Eyes*? and how many idle Ideas pass in at the *Ears*, *forever open* to the Vanity of empty and corrupted Air. The Luxuries of the *Palate* debauch the enslaved Mortal, and drag him on to Excess and Intemperance. He wanders among sensible Appearances, and forgets spiritual and divine Realities. He is hardly brought to consider, that the *things which are SEEN are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* Is not the Body, that thus abuses the Soul, the Rational Principle within, a vile Body? The Body, the beautiful Workmanship of an Alwise Artificer, how is it sunk beneath the Level of the brutal World, by its Sin against God? *O wretched that we are! who shall deliver us from the Body of this Death?*

Our Body is a weak, *infirm* Body, and therefore a vile Body. It is a feeble House of Clay, that totters to every Blast. Disease and Mortality lurk in every Member, and Vein, and Muscle. It is liable to Contagions and Distempers of all Sorts. They march silent and unseen in the fine Air about us. They lie brooding in their Venom, through all the Fluids within: Latent Destruction! Death in Ambuscade! A Thousand different Fevers stand ready to seize this Body; to torment it, and to burn away its Life: To lick up the finer Spirits, and snap the Vital Cord. It may be

8 *The glorious Change of the vile Body.*

at once *blinded* by a Defluxion of Rheum, fetter'd with the Tortures of the Gout, and broken in the Agonies of the Stone : Like *Sampson* in the *Philistian* Prison-house, at the same Time *blinded*, and *shackled*, and *grinding*. Every Nerve about us, is capable of Pains too great for us to bear, too strong for us to resist, and too subtil for us to escape. The Strength of the most *athletick* Body, is still on the Wing ; may fly away suddenly ; will do it speedily ; and must at last wholly leave it. The Beauty of the most *amiable* Body, is every Day hastening to fade, and go out in obscure Darkeness. Our daily eating and drinking, proclaim a feeble Body, that would faint and die if these were omitted. Every Time we set down to a Table, or take a Cup in our Hand, we confess we are Creatures that need constant Support and Nourishment. When we lie down to the necessary Sleep of the Night, we own the Sleep of the Night must relieve us a little from the long Slumber of the Grave. Every Breath we draw insinuates, in a silent Whisper, our Frailty, our Dependance on God, and our short Continuance : It warns us, that our *Life is Wind*. — So weak is our Body, that it takes away much of our Thought from our Souls, to contrive for its Life, and Health, and Sustenance. — Let us look now upon the brittle Frame, and exclaim, O the vile Body !

It is a *dying* Body, and therefore a vile Body. Here our Bodies now stand, perhaps flourishing in all the Pride and Bloom of Youth : Strong our Sinews ; moist our Bones ; active and supple our Joints ; our Pulses beating with Vigor, and our Hearts leaping with a Profusion of Life and Energy. But oh ! Vain Appearance and gaudy Dream ! Surely every Man at his best Estate, is altogether Vanity. He walks in a vain Show ; he glitters, with delusive Colors ; he spends his Years as an Idle Tale. What avails it, that he is now hardy and robust, who must quickly pant upon a Death-bed. What avails it, that his Limbs are sprightly in their easy Motions, which must quickly stretch in the dying Agony. The Lips now flush'd with a Rosy Colour, will anon quiver and turn pale. The Eyes that roll with a sparkling Vivacity, will fix in a ghastly Horror. The most musical Voice
will

will be stop'd; and the tuneful Breath fly away. The Face where Beauty now triumphs, will appear cold, and wan, and dismal, rifled by the Hand of Death. A cold Sweat will chill the Body; a hoarse Rattling will fill the Throat; the Heart will heave with Pain and Labour, and the Lungs catch for Breath, but gasp in vain. Our Friends stand in Tears about our Bed: They weep; but they cannot help us. The very Water with which they would cool and moisten our parched Mouths, we receive with a hollow Groan. Anon we give a Gasps, and they shriek out in Distress, '*Oh! He's gone,—He's dead!*' The Body in that Instant stretches on the Sheets, an awful Corpse. This is the End of our Body for this World: Pronounce now; Is it not a vile Body? But this brings me to the last Article.

Our Body will quickly be a *dead* Body, and this proclaims it a vile Body. The Silks and soft Linnen which now fold and adorn these Bodies, must be changed for a winding Sheet. The Applause and Compliment which now flatter us, are not heard in the Retirements of the Grave, to disturb its awful Silence: Nor shall Reproaches and Revilings break in upon our Rest there. Our pleasant Habitations will be left for others, while we have no Apartment left us, but a Coffin, or a Tomb at most. We shall forsake our Dishes and our Tables; and our selves become Food for the crawling Vermin of the Dust. How quickly shall we hasten to Clay and Ashes, in the solitary, and dark, and cold Grave?

In a few Years, the most beauteous, or learned, or pious Head will grin a hideous Skull. Our broken Coffins will shew nothing but black Bones, and black Mould, and Worms and Filth. The Places that knew us shall know us no more. The Persons who were most intimate in our Acquaintance; who sooth'd us with their Visits, or caress'd us in their Bosoms, will now forget us. When they shall perhaps enter our Tombs and take up our Bones in their Hands, they'll not suspect the frightful Carcase to be Ours, save by the Letters on the broken Coffin, or the Inscription on the mouldring Monument.

B

And

And now, *Man giveth up the Ghost, and where is he?* What becomes of the Dream of Worldly Happiness? Where are the Houses, and the Coffers? The Great Name, the loud Applause, and the Brutal Pleasure? His Riches are left to others: And to whom he knows not; whether a Wise Man or a Fool. He forsakes his numerous Houses, and is confined to a narrow Coffin, in a lonely Vault. Out of all his Lands he retains but a few Foot of Earth to cover him from the Sight. His boasted Name is forgot among the living, and scarce once in an Age casually read upon his Grave-stone. *His Breath goeth forth, he returneth to his Earth; in that very Day his Thoughts perish.*†

The Spirit is given up; and see the Body drops down, pale, and stiff, and cold. The Eyes are fixt; the Teeth are set; the Breath is fled. Is this the Face we once gaz'd upon with so much Pleasure? Are these the Cheeks that glow'd so fresh, and bloom'd so lovely? Are these the Lips that smil'd so graceful, and pour'd out such a gliding Stream of Eloquence and Musick? Where's the tuneful Voice that once held the listening Ear, and rais'd the attentive Eye? Where are the proportioned Limbs, the supple Joints, the vigorous Pulses, the beating Heart, the working Brain, and the breathing Breast? Lo, the Body is laid in the Dust, and the Worms cover it. Polluted Vermin crawl over every Part of the elegant Form, and the enchanting Face. It is folded in a winding Sheet, it is nailed in a black Coffin, and it is deposited in a silent Vault, amidst Shades and Solitude. The Skin breaks and moulders away; the Flesh drops in Dust from the Bones; the Bones are covered with black Mould, and Worms twist about them. The Coffins break, and the Graves sink in, and the disjointed Skeleton strews the lonely Vault. This shapely Fabrick must leave its Ruins among the Graves; lie neglected and forgot; moulder away without a Name, and scatter among the Elements. 'And were these Bones once living like ours? and must ours be as they?' This hideous Skull, the frightful Jaw fallen, and the black Teeth naked to the Eye, was it once a thinking Frame,

† Psal. cxlvi. 4.

Frame, covered with a beauteous Skin ? Strange Alteration made by Death ! And are not our Burying-Grounds full of such Spectacles ? What do they but illustrate and confirm the Doctrine ? Methinks every Grave, with open Mouth, preaches upon my Text, *This Vile Body*. O Vile Body ! under what infamous Dishonours of Loathsomeness and Corruption art thou ? Thou must be laid away in the dusty Galleries of the Grave, the gloomy Chambers of Death, unregarded and unknown ; lost in deep Retirement, and awful Silence. O Vile Body !

Thus we have seen with what Propriety Vileness belongs to these Bodies. How suitable and emphatical the degrading Epithet ? Let us here pause, and improve, and set Limits to the Description.

Is this Body so Vile and Wretched ? *How vain and foolish is it to be Proud of our Body.* τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπηνώσεως ἡμῶν : *The Body of our Humiliation.* Vain Men ! Proud of the very Body of Humiliation ; Vile, debasing, sinful Clay. Why should we set our Eyes upon that which is not ; or in a little Time will not be ? Why should we prefer our Bodies, and forget our Souls ? Cloath and adorn those, while we are regardless of the Salvation of these ? Why, ye *Fair*, should ye be proud of a Beauty destin'd to the embrace of Worms ? Or why, ye *Strong*, should ye boast the hardy Nature, which must quickly faint, and drop down breathless. O far be the Thoughts from us, to be vain of such vile Bodies ! Away, the haughtry Mein, and the disdainful Glance ; the conscious Smile, and the assuming Brow. Away the artful Movements and manag'd Airs of Wantonness and Pride. No more let airy Fashions and looser Modes of Dress expose the Body. Nor let it be lost in the studied Disproportions of an ambitious Garb. Why need we affect an Apparel, fantastically Demure, on the one Hand ; or choose on the other, Pomp, and Glitter, and empty Show ? We may appear decent in the Polite World, without running through all the quick Succession of Fopperies : The round † *Attire like the*

B 2

Moon,

† The Round Tire like the Moon, in Isai. iii. 18. was the Silver Crescent worn upon the Head, in idolatrous Honour to Diana Goddess of the Chase.

Moon, in a perpetual Circle of Changes. Let the vile Body be CLOATHED with HUMILITY :* Modesty and Sobriety are the best Ornaments.

But let us set Limits to the Exclamation, and not carry it too far. No; our Bodies, vile as they are, are to be honoured and respected by us. They are the wonderful Production of Omnipotence, the curious Workmanship of an alwise Artificer. Let the Body of the Sinner be as vile as it will, your Bodies, ye happy Believers, are raised above the common Clay in a nobler Honour. *What, know ye not, (says the Apostle) that your Bodies are the Members of JESUS CHRIST?—Know ye not, that your Bodies are the Temples of the HOLY GHOST; that dwelleth in you.*† Our Bodies, it is true, are in many respects vile; but yet, under all their humble Circumstances, they are the Members of our Lord JESUS. Let us always then, when we call our Bodies vile, remember that they are noble too, and intitled to the sublimest Honours. Let us take Care of them, cherish them, view them in the Light in which CHRIST looked upon his own Body. For he *spake concerning the Temple of his Body*, Joh. ii. 21. Let us respect and reverence our Bodies, as the Temples of the HOLY SPIRIT; the Members of JESUS CHRIST, and the Candidates of a glorious Resurrection. When we wash, or feed, or cloath, or adorn our Bodies, let such Meditations as these, produce, and sanctify the Act.

But we come to the second Doctrine.

These vile Bodies of ours shall be CHANGED. The greatest Part of Believers on CHRIST shall be changed by a Resurrection from the Dead: But not all. Some shall never die, but be found alive at the Appearance of CHRIST: These shall be caught up to meet the descending Judge, and shall be changed in the shining Ascent. See in the 1st Epist. Cor. xv. Chap. where the Apostle treats this Subject at large, ver. 51, 52. *Behold I shew you a mystery; we shall*
not

* 1 Pet. v. 5. † 1 Cor. vi. 15. 19.

not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trumpet, (for the Trumpet shall sound) and the dead shall be raised incorruptable, and we shall be changed. So that in the End, there will be very little Difference between the dead Believers, and those whom our Lord finds alive at his coming. Both shall be changed at our Lord's Descent; caught up to meet him in the Regions of Air, as his fiery Chariot rolls down amidst Thunder, and Clouds, and Whirlwinds. The Living Saints shall be snatched from the Earth, and changed from the feeble State they are now in: Those who are Dead, and sleep among the Tombs, shall shake off the Dishonours of the Graves, and be changed from the Vileness of Dust and Worms. Of these in their Order.

This vile Body shall be changed from the STATE of DEATH. What though our Bodies die; they shall revive from the Condition of Curse and Corruption. *If a Man die, shall he live again?* Yes; at the Resurrection of the Dead shall he be raised. GOD shall raise the Dead, by the Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he has given Assurance unto all Men in that he raised him from the Dead. So long ago as the Time of *Job*, the holy Man could look to a Redeemer, who should call him from the Corruptions of the Grave, and renew his consumed Limbs to Strength, and his Eyes to Light, [*Job xix. 25, 26, 27.*] *For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth. And though after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see GOD: whom I shall see for my self, and my Eyes behold, and not another, though my Reins be consumed within me.* We must die, but what then, we are as sure of a Resurrection as we are of Death. But Oh! what a blessed Change will the Resurrection make upon our dead Bodies. Perhaps the Worms have feasted themselves upon our Last Dust; but they shall refund it, and give back every Atom: All that really belongs to our numerical Body. The Fishes perhaps have eaten the Carcase, buried in the Waves, and lost in the Depths of the Ocean: But *the Sea* also shall return it back, and give up
the

the Dead which are in it.† These Bodies may dissolve, and scatter among the Elements. Our Fluids may forsake their Vessels; the Solid contract, and fold up in its primitive Miniature. And even after that the little invisible Bones may moulder to finer Dust, the Dust may refine to Water, wander in a Cloud, float in a River, or be lost in the wide Sea, and undistinguished Drop among the Waves. They may be again sucked up by the Sun, and fall in a Shower upon the Earth; they may refresh the Fields with Dew, flourish in a Spire of Grass; look green in a Leaf, or gaudy in a Flower or a Blossom. For we know Matter is continually changing, and one Element perpetually losing it self in another. But let our Dust wander where it will, throughout the whole material Creation, yet at the first Blast of the last Trumpet, it shall all at once rush together, and start up a compleat Man. The vile Body shall be changed, wherever it lay hid: The Dust shall be called together; the Bones shall harden, and the Joints connect; a new, unknown, incorruptible Fluid suddenly fill the Vessels; the Sinews shall brace with an immortal Strength, no more to be parted; and the Skin cover all with everlasting Beauty, never to fade any more. This shall be the Change from the *State of Death*, which our vile Bodies shall pass through—The prophetick Vision of *Ezekiel*, shall be literally fulfilled at that day. *Ezek. xxxvii.*—14.

This vile Body shall be changed from its PRESENT STATE. Though it shall be raised from the Dead, it shall *not* revive to its *present* mean and dishonourable Condition, but shall be changed. Now it is a Body full of Uncleaness and Corruption, Disease and Death. But it shall be changed. *Though it is sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption.** Now our Body is mean and vile, and upon many Accounts dishonourable; but it shall be changed. *Though it is sown in Dishonour, it is raised in Glory.* Now they are weak, and faint, soon exhausted, and spent with long and close Labour: But they shall be changed from their feeble state. *It is sown in Weakness, it is raised in Power.* Now how gross and heavy are our Bodies? How sluggish
and

† Rev. xx. 13.

* 1 Cor. xv. 42. 50. 44. 53.

and unactive the unweildy Flesh? But it shall be changed. *This I say Brethren, Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth Corruption inherit Incorruption. It is sown a natural Body, it is raised a Spiritual Body. What can we say more to illustrate the blessed Change? Our Body is now in a thousand respects an infirm and dying Body: But, O glorious Transformation! This corruptible must put on Incorruption; and this mortal must put on Immortality. This is the Change from the present State, of which these very vile Bodies are the Candidates. But we will not prevent our selves from saying*

These vile Bodies of ours shall be FASHIONED LIKE UNTO CHRIST's GLORIOUS BODY. They shall be changed from the corrupt and unclean State of Death. More than this: they shall be changed from all the Dishonours and Meanness of the present Life: But O sublimest Glory of all! O divine Expectation, and sacred Hope! They shall be fashioned like unto his glorious Body. Like the illustrious and immortal Body of our blessed LORD JESUS CHRIST. Observe; CHRIST still has a Body. His Body has a Form and Shape belonging to it. It is not our Bodies shall be made like unto CHRIST's glorious Body; but shall be fashioned; σὺμμορφον, shall receive a like Figure and Shape, and be changed into the same Image. So says the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 49. The first man is of the Earth, earthy: the second Man is the Lord from Heaven. And as we have born the Image of the Earthy, we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly.

But what is this Image? and what is implied in that most expressive Idea, our vile shall be changed; and fashioned like unto CHRIST's glorious Body? I shall just hint at a few Particulars very briefly.

To have the vile Body fashioned like unto CHRIST's glorious Body, implies in it, that it be made *splendid and illustrious*. The Body of CHRIST is a shining Body, and scatters Light and Glory round about it. Saul was struck blind, dazzled with the unsufferable Blaze, that rush'd in a Tempest

Tempest upon his Eyes, from the Body of the Son of GOD *John* beheld him, with his Face shining like the Sun in its meridian Flame, and his Body beaming in an answerable Glory. The Angels and the glorified Saints behold him, as the great Ornament and the Light of Heaven : *For the Lamb is the Light of it, and they need no Sun, or Moon, or Candle.*†

If CHRIST's Body be thus splendid, our's shall be so too ; for they shall be fashioned like unto his glorious Body. They shall put on a shining Form ; shoot like a Flame from the Grave, and glitter like a Ray of Light up the Ether. *Dan. xii. 3. They that be wise, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they which turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.*

It implies that our Bodies shall be *immortal*. CHRIST's Body is immortal ; *Being raised from the Dead, he dieth no more*, *Rev. vi. 9.* He pronounces with a Voice of Triumph, *Rev. i. 18. I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen.*

Is the Body of CHRIST immortal ? our Bodies shall be fashioned like unto his own immortal Body. *This Mortal must put on Immortality.* We must all die ; we shall die but once. Being raised from the Dead, Death shall be swallowed up in Victory ; and *there shall be no more Death.**

It implies that our Bodies shall be glorified with very *mysterious and astonishing Powers*. The Body of Christ could ascend and descend with equal ease. It could stand aloft in the Air, without any visible Support ; so he looked down through the opened Heavens, upon the expiring *Stephen ; Act. vi. 56.* So he dazzled the Eyes of *Saul* in the Road to *Damascus ; Act. ix. 3.* It could rise up gradually from the Ground, and tower away through the upper Skies, to the World above. So he ascended in the View of the Men of *Galilee*, till a Cloud sail'd under his Feet, and ravished him from their gazing Eyes ; *Act. i. 9.* The Body of CHRIST could shift its form as there was Occasion, and vary its Shape and Dress, according to the Disposition of his Soul. To

Mary

† *Rev. xxi. 23.*

* *Rev. xxi. 4.*

Mary Magdalene he assumed the Form and Habit of a Gardener; *Job. xx. 15.* While the same Day, the two Disciples going to *Emmaus*, mistook him for a Traveller, from his Air and Dress.† *For after that he appeared in ANOTHER FORM* || *unto two of them as they walked, and went into the Country.* In a Word, the Body of CHRIST could appear or vanish just as he pleased, and it should seem without Resistance from grosser Matter. Thus to his Disciples met together, with the Door shut, on a sudden, he stood confess'd in the midst of them, to their Wonder and Amazement.‡ I can see nothing tending to Heresy in this Conjecture: Nor do I think we have any reason to read the Passage, *after the Time of shutting the Door.* But it is indifferent to our present Head, whether the Body of our Lord penetrated through the Pores of the Wood, as Light, which is a Body does through the much finer Pores of Glass; or whether it had a Power so marvellous, as to open and shut the Door, at once so swift, and so soft, as to be entirely unperceived both by the Sight and Hearing. Either the one or the other, shows the wondrous Powers of the raised Body.

And are these the Glories of CHRIST's Body? our's shall be fashioned like it. When we are raised from the Dead, our Bodies will be active as the Flames, and vigorous as the Sun-beams. They will be able to command their Shape, or to shift their Place as they please. To glide over Oceans, rise through the Clouds, dart like a Stream of Lightning from East to West, and range suddenly over the whole Creation.

It implies, That our Bodies shall be renewed, *holy Bodies.* CHRIST's Body is holy, and always was so. *He knew no Sin;* and though he was made in the likeness of sinful Flesh, yet without Sin. He was *holy, harmless, undefiled, sepearte from Sinners.* His Body was sacred, and consecrate, and perfectly holy from its Birth. So the Angel blessed the Womb of the pregnant Virgin, *The Holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of GOD.*§

C

Is

† Luk. xxiv. 13. Mark xvi. 12.

|| *Μαρμαρῶν*, The Word which *Aristotle* uses for his *Substantial Form.*

‡ Joh. xx. 19. 26. Luk. xxiv. 36. 37. § Luk. i. 35.

Is the Body of CHRIST holy? our's shall be so too; shall be fashioned like unto his own holy Body. These Senses shall be refined, these Passions rectified, and these Appetites adjusted to a perfect Order and Oeconomy. O divine Felicity, when this sinful Flesh, shall be changed into a perfect holy Temple! Our Sanctification displays it self upon Spirit, Soul, and Body. In this Life, we are sanctified but in Part, in each of these. Our Souls are wholly sanctified, upon the last happy Gasps of Death: Our Bodies will be so too, at the final Note of the great Trumpet, that shall call them from the dusty Bosom of the Grave. Then shall they be raised holy Bodies, fashioned like unto CHRIST's most glorious Body.

Why should we proceed any further? Shall our Bodies be fashioned like to CHRIST's glorious Body? It is enough! We can go no higher; can wish no more! We make a vain effort to describe the Glory; which the Fancy cannot paint, nor the Heart conceive. Our raised Bodies will shine with a Splendor, which, at present, we can have no equal Idea of. *Beloved, now are we the Sons of GOD; and it doth not appear what we shall be: But we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.† It does not yet appear what we shall be: We can't imagine or conceive the Brightness of our future Glory. No matter; It is enough for us, that we shall with these Eyes behold the beauteous and majestick Face of JESUS, and see him as he is. If we may but with open Face behold the Glory of the Lord, we shall irresistibly catch the Beams, and be changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory. The Vision will be a transforming Vision. We shall be like Him, for we shall see him as he is. Be like Him; How? who can say how? It is above our mortal Language to declare how. It does not appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. O happy Vision! O blissful Change! O mysterious Glory!*

The Fourth Proposition of the Text, is, It is our LORD JESUS CHRIST who shall change our vile Body, and fashion it like His glorious Body. This is the Work of the

† 1 Joh. iii. 2.

the great GOD our SAVIOUR. He *can* do it, and he *will* do it. Here is the *Power*; here is the *Goodness* of GOD. He is *able* and he *will* keep, and raise, and glorify, even the Dust committed to Him. From the Hints of the Context I might fetch Arguments enough to enlarge here.— But I see the Time expires, and I desist.

I come now to make a short Improvement of the noble Doctrines.

How unhappy are wicked Men ! He shall change OUR vile Body that it may be fashioned like his. Ours ; none but ours. The Unbeliever and Impenitent has no Interest at all in this *blessed hope* ; none but the sincere Christian can apply it to himself. It is true the wicked must be raised from the Dead, as well as the holy. But Oh ! how wide the Difference between the one and the other, at the great decisive Day ! The wicked shall be *raised to Shame and everlasting Contempt*. No Glory shall shine about them, no Image of CHRIST shall appear upon them. They shall be changed, 'tis true, but O the dreadful Change ! Their *feeble* Bodies must be changed into Bodies *strong* to bear the Wrath of an Almighty GOD. Their *dying* and *dead* Bodies shall be changed into Bodies of an *immortal* Constitution ; Bodies that must live forever in unsufferable Anguish ! That must measure Eternal Ages with Groans and Out-Cries, and Execrations and Despair. Their *corrupt* and *filthy* Bodies shall be changed into ten thousand Times more *hateful* and *loathsome* Figures : Fit to be Inhabitants of Hell, and Companions for Devils. Their *healthy* and *pleasurable* Bodies shall be changed, be seized and rack'd with an unknown Variety of Pains and Torments ; shall feed the Flames of the horrible Furnace ; kindled with the Wrath of GOD that burneth as an Oven, and endureth for ever. And Oh ! *who can dwell with devouring Fire ? who can endure everlasting Burnings ?* The *darkness of the Grave* shall be changed for the *outer Darkness*, where shall be *weeping and gnashing of Teeth*. Instead of being fashioned like unto CHRIST's glorious Body ; they shall be blacken'd with the finish'd Image of the Devil, and be consigned over to *everlasting*

Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. O the fearful Change, which the Resurrection will make upon the Bodies of the wicked !

Let us learn to set a double Value upon our Bodies. Though we may not idolize them, as the Crime generally is, we ought to honour them, and cherish them with a proper Care. What Honours are they coming to in a future State ? They shall be raised, and changed, and fashioned like to CHRIST's glorious Body.

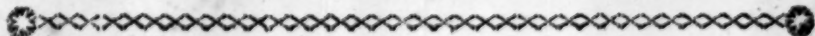
Learn the Honours of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. 'Tis HE who shall raise these vile Bodies, and fashion them like his glorious Body. Herein is the dear Saviour *mighty* as a GOD ; herein he is *good* as a GOD too. Not only *can* he, but he *will* do this for us. O what Love should beat in the Hearts of these Bodies, to him who shall change them, and be the Strength of *these* very Hearts, and their Portion for ever. What Thanks shall we pay this adored JESUS ! What grateful Returns shall we make him ! Let every Breath arise tuneful in his Honours, who shall quickly inspire these Nostrils with Breath that will never scatter or gasp away. Let every Pulse in our Blood, beat Time to Musick of his Praise, who will anon give the Pulses to leap through this living Frame, unfainting and immortal. Let every Member of these vile Bodies, grow honourable, by Employment in his Service, who shall change our vile Bodies, and fashion them like his own. Our *Eyes*, be ye exhausted in viewing the Works of GOD, in Reading his Word, and be lifted up to Heaven in his Praise ! These Eyes which shall see GOD ! Our *Ears*, employ all your curious Organs in hearing his dear Voice ; these Ears which shall quickly be changed ; which shall hear the Voice of the Son of GOD, in the Graves where they lie, and be transported with endless *Hallelujahs*. Shall not these *Tongues* of ours be redeemed from the silent Grave, and utter the Anthems of Heaven ? Awake up then, our Tongue, our Glory ; and bless and praise the LORD. These *Lips* shall forget the Pale of Death, and be changed, and bloom afresh : what can we do less than praise thee aloud with joyful Lips, who shall

shall renew their faded Beauty. O let *all* the Body which shall be changed by CHRIST, be employed in the Service of CHRIST. How was CHRIST's Body employed upon Earth? Let our Bodies be employed like *his now*, which shall be fashioned like *his hereafter*. -

And to conclude. *Rejoice, O Believer, Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead Body shall they arise; Awake, and sing ye that dwell in the Dust: for thy dew is as the dew of Herbs, and the Earth shall cast out her dead.** Shall our Body be raised from the Grave, let us not be afraid to put off this Body; let us meet Death with Triumph! Death! which shall only change this vile Body for a glorious one. What glories are to come even upon this vile Body of ours. Our Souls, the noblest Parts, they are safe. Nay, but our Body too, the vile Body, shall be all glorious. Now, perhaps, these Bodies are in Pain; but quickly they shall know no more Pain. Now they are weary with Labour; quickly, they shall rest from their Labour, and raise to constant Exercise without Weariness. Now they weep and sigh in many Sorrows: Quickly, all Tears shall be wiped from our Eyes, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away. Now they shall die, and go down to the Graves which wait for us: But though we die, yet shall we live; we shall be redeemed from the Power of the Grave, and arise to die no more. *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my Soul in the Grave; nor suffer thy holy one always to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of Life, in a Resurrection from the Dead; in thy Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at thy Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.*

A M E N.

* *Iſai. xxvi. 19.*



To fill up the vacant Pages, is inserted the following Extract from the *New-England Weekly Journal*, written by the Author in the Year 1727, under an assumed Character, and since often reprinted in *Magazines*, and elsewhere.

IN a former Paper, I began to consider those awful Changes which all Mankind must pass through, but which now lie hid in the Mazes of Futurity, and appear to our Eyes in a Cloud at a great Distance. I then considered *Death*, as awful and unavoidable; full of surprize, and big with a solemn Kind of Curiosity. As I was resuming these Contemplations, and meditating on that new Face of Things which awakens to the Eyes of a Spirit newly departed from the Body, I found among my Papers a small *Arabian Manuscript* which I lit upon in my Travels thro' *Persia*. It contains a Collection of Tracts written by several famous Oriental *Magi*; among which is One, called, the Meditations of *Cassim* the Son of *Ahmed*. This being adapted to my present Design, I shall communicate it to the Publick, in a Translation as literal as the Idiom of the two Languages will admit. I shall only observe, that though the Boldness of the Metaphors, and the Liberty of the Style are, after the Eastern Way, above the little Niceties of our colder Climates, and proclaim it genuine; yet there appear many things in it, which look like some of the Refinements of our modern *European Philosophy*; whence it should seem that they were acquainted with them before us. And whether we did not at first derive our Knowledge in these Instances from them, I leave to be decided by Men of Learning, who have Leisure, and a Genius for Antiquity.

The Meditation of CASSIM the Son of AHMED.

I Was a few Nights ago, walking over the Hills in the Western and unfrequented Paths of the City *Lima*, which looks towards the Desert of *Eleatif*, in order to refresh myself after the Studies of the Day. As I grew tired with walking, I seated myself on the Head of one of the highest among that verdent Range of Mountains, and gave myself into a profound Contemplation on the Works of the great Creator, which then presented themselves to my View, in the most charming Prospect imaginable. The Height of the Place, the Stillness of the Season, the Majesty and Solemnity of the Shades, which were at that time silvered over with a bright Moon-shine, spread through my whole Soul a Tranquility, not to be felt but by a Mind free from Guilt, and raised by the Raptures of Religion and Devotion. On one Hand of the Summit where I sat, the Town appeared buried in Sleep and Silence, and produced in my Heart those tender overflowings of Compassion and Humanity which are natural to a generous Mind. On the other side, the Desert of *Eleatif* extended its Uncultivated Demensions, and by its Vastness and Ruggedness of Landkip, struck my Imagination with a kind of pleasing Horror. I could observe nothing throughout its savage Wastes but the Caverns and Precipices, broken Rocks and Mountains, hallow Vales, sandy Plains, and gloomy Forests with which it is covered. At the Foot of the Hill, the River which waters *Lima*, flowed along in a serene Calm, whose Waves seemed to murmur in their Sleep, and nod gently to the Shore. Over my Head the Skies shone with a lively blue, whence the beautiful Empress of the Night dispensed her Influences, and the Stars twinkled round her Throne, like so many Diamonds in an Arch of Saphire. In a word, the Place, the Season, and the Subject of my Meditations all conspired to fix my Thoughts, and kindle in my Bosom the Flames of a holy Transport.

AS I melted away in these Delights, I could not help imagining that the same Employment I was then pleasing myself with, bore some Analogy to those which regale the departed Spirits of good Men.

"O Son of *Ahmed*, said I to myself, do not the Inhabitants of Paradise thus admire the Works of GOD! Does not the Harmony of their Praise rove through the Bowers of Bliss, and soften the Murmurs of the Streams of Life! Are they not overflowed with a Flood of Joy, when they search the Labyrinths of Creation, and range through the Dominions of the Supreme Being! Methinks I behold them lift up their admiring Eyes, from the Fields green in an eternal Flourish, and with a strengthened and enlarged Ken, penetrate into the remote Spaces of the Ether. They view the various Systems that compose our Universe, and their Intelecks are stretched and crowded with the ample Vision. Here the six Stars, like so many Suns, beat upon their sight in a Tempest of Glory. Here the several Planets gravitate to their respective Suns, and wheel about in a mighty Eddy of Liquid Flame, Here the lesser Satellites dance attendance to their primary Planets, and with a milder gleam, brighten their Shades, and refresh their

"Hours

"Hours of Darkness. While all are inhabited by a numerous Race of Creatures of different Capacities and Orders ; but all exquisitely adapted to glorify their infinite Maker.

"WHILE I was in the midst of this Soliloquy, and as my Thoughts fixed, and grew warmer by degrees, a Philosophical Enquiry started to me, which I did not find easy to answer. "How, said I to my self, can the Spirits in Paradise, stript of the humane Body, taste the Delights of those soft and indulgent Climates ? How will the naked Soul be able to behold the Wonders of creating Art, which are so profusely poured out upon those Regions of Bliss and Immortality ? Can they see the Verdure of the Hills, and the Flourish of the Fields, when they have left their mortal Eyes behind them ? Or can they, without the Ears of the Body, be ravish'd with the Concert of warbling Birds, rilling Streams, and bubbling Fountains ? Surely in vain will the Blossoms throw their Odours, and the Groves of S. ices will perfume the Air in vain, if the power of Smelling be utterly extinguished in the sepearte Spirits of good Men : And to what Purpose will the Eruits blush, or the Breezes cool, if the Taste be entirely gone, and the Nerves can feel no more ?

"WHILE I was losing my self in these Enquiries, I beheld a Man seated on the Head of a Mountain at some Distance, who looked down to me, and with a Voice full of Majesty, called me up.

"CASSIM, said he, draw near, be attentive to what I utter, and cease to perplex thy Mind with the Unsearchable Mysteres of our World. Know thus much ; I am a Genius ; my Name is Secret. The Place of my Abode is remote, and hidden ; Joy dwells there ; and Darkness intercepts the Sight of it. Silence shall cover it ; Death shall lay open its Gates. Assure thy self, thou Son of Ahmed, that the unembodied Genii among us, are perfectly holy, and happy beyond thy glimmering Conceptions. What avails it thee to know how they converse ; what they see ; where they dwell. Cease thy Curiosity, and calm thy Mind. Would you know what we do here, and be acquainted with our Enjoyments, love your Maker, converse with your own Heart, and delight in doing Good. The Time hastens in which we shall receive our Bodies ; for the Dust shall quicken, and the Soul be reunited. That which now is in the Grave, stiff and pale, and hastning to Clay and Ashes, shall revive, shall brighten, shall fly away ; beauteous as the Morning, vigorous as the Light, unfading and immortal. Enquire not how this shall be : go to the Looms of Persia and they shall instruct thee. Dost thou not observe the shining little Worm that spins thy Garments ? lo ! he sets thee an Example, and inspires thy Hopes. He glorifies his Maker, he winds his silken Nest for the good of others, and he retires inwards. Having done his Work he dies ; being dead, he rises again. You have often seen the useful Insect expire, and his Skin wither, and dry away ; and yet even this dry Skin become a prolifick Egg and a new Life spring in this little Monument of Death. You have beheld the dead Silkworm revive a Butterfly the most beautiful and curious of all that splendid Race of Insects. What more entertaining Specimen of the Resurrection is there, in the whole Circumference of Nature ? Here are all the wonders of that Day in Miniature. It was once a despicable Worm, it is raised a kind of painted little Bird. Formerly it crawled along with a slow and leisurely Motion : now it flutters aloft upon its gilded Wings. How much improved is its speckled Covering, when all the Gaudiness of Colour is scattered about its Plumage. It is spangled with Gold and Silver, and has every Gem of the Orient sparkling among its curious Feathers. Here a brilliant Spot, like a clear Diamond, twinkles with an unsullied Flame, and trembles with numerous Lights, that glitter in a gay Confusion. There a Sapphire casts a milder Gleam, and shews like the blue Expanse of Heaven in a fair Winter Evening. In this Place an Emerald, like the calm Ocean, displays its chearful and vivid Green : And close by a Ruby flames with the ripened Blush of the Morning. The Breast and Legs, like Ebony, shone with a glorious Darkness ; while its expanded Wings are edged with the golden Magnificence of the Topaz. Thus the illustrious little Creature is finished with the divinest Art, and looks like an animated Composition of Jewels, that blend their promiscuous Beams about him. Thus, Oh Cassim, shall the Bodies of Good Men be raised ; thus shall they shine, and thus fly away. Cease then thy Enquiries ; learn to live, and long to die. Prepare for our World, and get thy Work done quickly.

"THE Genius having spoken these Words, continued silent for some time, when my Ears were at once surprized with the Melody of innumerable Voices, and instruments of Musick, which seemed to resound from a great Height in the Air. Immediately the Genius soar'd away, and my Eyes lost him in the sublime Ether. I then turned my sight Eastward, and saw the dawning Day smile on the Tops of the Mountains.

"The Meditation of Cassim is finished."

6 AP64

